

Compaction is a Silent Issue

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Farming operations have been evolving to larger and larger machinery to cover more acres faster. Unfortunately we are starting to pay the price for that and the price is reduced plant growth and yield because of compaction. This fall may be a good time to see it when you have wheat emerging under tough conditions. If you can see wheel tracks from equipment, that's compaction and while it may disappear with more growth, it's still robbing yield. The real problem is that we don't have a lot of good ways to deal with compaction. Deep ripping is less effective than we once thought. It helps, but it's not a cure. Ultimately we need to be looking at preventing compaction rather than fixing it. One thing that that means is keeping anything with road tires, on the road. Road tires can create 5 to 8 times the compaction load. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Too Early or Dry for Anhydrous

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. Anhydrous ammonia is one of the most commonly used and cheapest forms of nitrogen fertilizer that we use in agriculture. We inject it into the soil, often in the fall, where it reacts with the soil moisture. There are some things we need to keep in mind when applying it though specifically soil moisture conditions and soil temperature. We need soil temperatures below 50 degrees to slow the reactions that can cause the nitrogen to be lost and there needs to be enough soil moisture for the ammonia to react with. Soil temperatures can be quickly monitored on the mesonet. Soil moisture in the zone of injection is a field by field situation. Before you stick one coulter in the ground this fall dig down to the level of injection and see if there is any soil moisture there. If it's bone dry, you likely don't want to apply anhydrous this fall! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Late Planting of Wheat

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. I talked about this a little bit last week and wanted to cover it in a little more detail this week. I really feel that planting wheat after about November 10th is a bad idea. We are into the late plant period for wheat for crop insurance purposes so there is that angle to consider as well BUT, if you are still planting wheat or plan to plant some wheat yet, boost the seeding rate to 120 pounds per acre, but no higher. Late planted wheat has fewer tillers and heads are smaller so we've just got to try to make more heads. Planting more than 120 pounds per acre can actually start to depress yields. This comes from simply insufficient amount of root space and sunlight for each plant. Make sure you include some starter fertilizer regardless of phosphorus soil levels and get your nitrogen on sooner than later! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Inventory Your Feed Supplies

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As harvest is wrapping up, hopefully, this would be a good time to sit down and start to inventory your cattle feed supplies and not just list what you have but where it is located. If you have multiple cuttings of alfalfa, consider testing each cutting and even each field so you've got a good idea of the lower quality feed you can feed now, or early, and higher quality feed that you hold back for cold times or soon after calving. Taking time to inventory feed now allows you to figure out how much you'll need and what you might be short of so you can plan ahead and not have to make quick expensive decisions. You might also consider moving some of the feed supplies around so you can stage it in case of a snow or ice storm during the winter. Matching up location of feed to where the cattle will be can save you a lot of time! I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.

Start Working on Ag Leases

This is Ag Outlook, I'm Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent. As fall harvest winds down and cattle get moved out of summer pastures it's a good time to get to work on leases and visiting with your landlords. With pasture leases let the owner know the condition of fences and how they want to proceed with repairs. Talk about stocking rates and need for brush control and who's going to handle that. Never assume anything with a lease - talk about everything. Crop leases are the same thing regardless of if it's a cash lease or a crop share lease. Talk about how the crop did this year, and why. Talk about any conservation work that may need to be done. Talk about what your plans are for next year's crop. Ask the landlord what questions they have. If the landlord wants to talk about next year's lease, that's great. If not just mention that you'll be back after the first of the year to visit some more. I'm Chuck Otte and this has been Ag Outlook.